

America's Watershed Challenge

Article written by Tim Good, Planning Program Supervisor, Will County Forest Preserve District's Horizons Newsletter

The National Geographic Society recently released the results of its "River IQ" survey as part of its Geography Action! Rivers 2001 project. Just like every other geography quiz they do, we flunked! Here are just a few examples of how little we know.

√ Two thirds of the people surveyed thought that water was a renewable resource, rather than a cycle where no new water is ever created. Water is somewhat like oil; oil is theoretically renewable, but who has a few million years to wait?

√ Although the Society reports that 50% of all wetlands have been lost in the last century, the average response was that less than 20% of our wetlands has been destroyed. The threat is greater than we think.

√ The average person thought that each of us uses only 50 gallons of water per day when in fact, each of us uses about 100 gallons per day. This includes bathwater, dishwater, laundry, flushing, watering the lawn, etc.

√ While 98% of the respondents felt that protecting rivers was important, only one-third of them knew that land use and urban sprawl were the greatest threat to watersheds. We in essence "don't know what hit us."

√ On the positive side, more than half knew what a watershed is. On the negative side, two-thirds of us believed that watersheds and wetlands were the same thing. The most important concepts here is that we all live in a watershed, even if we do not see the water out our windows.

√ Almost 90% of the people surveyed were unfamiliar with the term "non point source pollution," and therefore few people knew that runoff is the largest source of water pollution. More than 40% incorrectly thought that water going down the storm drain was treated before being released. Farms are still the largest source of runoff pollution, but in Will County golf courses, lawns, parking lots, and roadways are quickly catching up as big polluters of water.

Knowledge is our best weapon to address this issue. We need to understand the ramifications of our actions and realize that we all live downstream from someone and upstream from someone else. We need to develop a golden rule of being a good watershed citizen.

Barriers to Land Development

Taken from the fall 2001 issue of *The Conservation Foundation Newsletter*, Vol. XII, No. 4

An article written by Edward McMahon in the spring issue of *Planning Commissioners Journal* lists seven barriers to the kind of sustainable community development that so many of us would like to see. You know the kind--with real neighborhoods, shopping within walking distance, clean air and water, inviting open spaces and natural areas and community amenities.

Inflexible Local Regulations. Typically, local ordinances make it easier for developers to build the kind of developments we see springing up all over. He advocates for more flexible regulations that allow narrower streets, mixed uses, clustered building, and innovative ideas.

Outdated Market Perceptions. Because sustainable developments are unfamiliar to many of us, they are perceived as too risky. As a result, we continue to put a changing society into housing developed to fit a 1950's style family. This leaves the needs of, for example, retirees, single parents, empty nesters, and singles unmet. The market data show that more people prefer to live next to natural open space than to golf courses. Yet, because golf courses are the closest they can get to that kind of space, even though most of them don't play golf, that is where they end up living.

High Development and Process Costs. Many existing laws make sustainable development prohibitively expensive. Well-intended but overly rigid building codes deter infill development. Instead, governments need to provide incentives for things such as the reuse of historic structures and brown field development.

(continued on page 7...)

Thoughts to Ponder . . .

By Bill Gradle, Illinois NRCS State Conservationist,
Champaign, Illinois



A number of times every year, I have the pleasure of making special trips to our Nation's capitol where I attend meetings or conferences with my counterparts from across the country. Usually, we gather to discuss farm policy or, more recently, to try and determine what the 2002 budget holds in store for NRCS.

As many of you have already witnessed personally, procedures at the airport are more laborious than ever, but once on the airplane, everything seems fairly normal. I fly coach and so I never know who I'll sit next to or who I'll have as a traveling companion. Sometimes I have the pleasure of sitting and visiting with a talkative senior citizen or watching a college student lost in a textbook, or I may spend my time trying to avoid conversation with a rambling salesman. Sometimes I share the aisle with an accomplished corporate executive or an unemployed individual flying out for a big job interview.

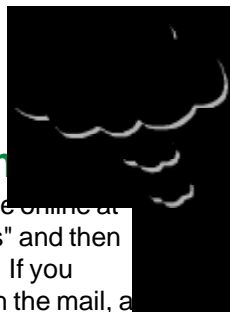
No matter who I sit next to, no matter what their net worth may be or what their corporate assets may amount to, I have to think that I have something none of them can touch. Their companies may be bigger than NRCS, their paychecks, 401Ks, payrolls, and stock options might put me to shame. But when I'm on that airplane, I can look out the window, look down, and see acre after acre and mile after mile of what NRCS does best.

Our impact is great. Our efforts to educate private landowners and help them put conservation on the land is clear to see. I can see the lines on the land; all the contours, shapes, and sizes that I know so well. I know what those lines are. I know what good they are doing. And I know that in some way, NRCS was probably involved.

Land is a precious commodity. This nation is blessed with incredibly productive and scenic lands. I'm sure that the businessmen and women who I sit next to on airplanes have evidence and proof of the success of their work, but it can't be nearly as impressive, extensive, or generate more pride than what I see when I look out the window and see the "signature" of stewardship and conservation on the land.

Read The Newsletter Online

Remember! This newsletter is available online at www.il.nrcs.usda.gov. Click on "News" and then on the purple button for "Newsletters" If you currently receive this resource through the mail, a would prefer to read it from our homepage, please let us know so that we can save on printing and mailing costs. Thanks!



Events, Workshops, Meetings, Conferences . . .

International Erosion Control Association 33rd Annual Conference & Expo, February 25 - March 1, 2002, Orlando, Florida. For more information, visit www.ieca.org or call (970) 879-8563.

Breaking the Cycle of Repetitive Flood Loss, Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Annual Conference, June 23-28, 2002, Phoenix, AZ. Call Diane at (608) 274-0123 or visit www.floods.org for details.

Defending the Integrity of Ground Water: The Impact of Natural and Manmade Disasters, July 10-12, 2002, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA). Call Julie at (800) 551-7379 x 530 or visit www.ngwa.org for more information.

"Setting the Pace for Conservation," 2002 Annual Conference, Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), July 13-17, 2002, Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN. Call for Papers and Interactive Sessions. Visit <http://www.swcs.org> for more details.

StormCon--The North American Surface Water Quality Conference and Exposition, August 12-15, 2002 at the Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, FL. For information on the conference or to submit a paper, contact Janice at (805) 681-1300 x 12 or visit www.Stormcon.com for details.

"Integrating Remote Sensing at the Global, Regional, and Local Scale," Nov. 11-15, 2002, Adam's Mark Hotel, Denver, CO. Sponsored by the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Visit www.asprs.org/Pecora-ISPRS-2002 for details.

Web Directory



National Watershed Coalition--<http://nacdn.net/org/nwc>

National Library for the Environment--www.cnie.org/

New Chicago Wilderness--www.chicagowilderness.org

State of the Environment Report--

<http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/ctap2>.

Protecting Nature in Your Community Guidebook--

www.nipc.cog.il.us/new-pubs.htm#Nature



NRCS

Directory



William J. Gradle
NRCS State Conservationist
2118 W. Park Court
Champaign, IL 61821
PH: (217) 353-6600

Theresa Chadwick, ASTC FOD3
685 Larry Power Dr.
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
PH: (815) 937-3233

Kent Sims, NRCS Community Assistance Specialist
313 Naperville Rd., Suite J
Plainfield, IL 60544
PH: (815) 577-3597 Ext. 6

Visit NRCS' Internet Homepage at:
<http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov>

To contact your local County NRCS office, look in the phone book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture or the NRCS website.

Chicago Partnership in Resource Conservation
Contact: Bob Jankowski, DC
1201 S. Gougar Rd.
New Lenox, IL 60451
PH: (815) 462-3106

East St. Louis Partnership in Resource Conservation
Rena Cheeseboro, Community Planner
100 N. 8th St.
East St. Louis, IL 62201
PH: (618) 271-9540



NRCS Profile: Keith Eichorst, NRCS Community Planner

With a B.S. degree in Physical Geography from Western Illinois University, it was clear early on that Keith had a keen interest in the natural world. His horizons were broadened when he lived in Germany for three years, where he observed that the natural resources of that country were a serious national concern. Keith returned to the U.S. and spent the next several years working in the private sector as a manager for a landscape nursery, a part-time teacher, and a geographic information manager. He then resumed his studies at Western Illinois University and received a Masters in Geography with an emphasis in Environmental Impact Analysis and Land Use Planning in 1994.

Soon after, Keith hooked up with the one federal agency that would allow him to fully use his training, skills, and experience—he was hired as Illinois NRCS' first field-level Community Planner and joined NRCS at the newly established Chicago Metro Team in Naperville, IL. Keith now works out of NRCS' Plainfield office, serving the needs of NRCS clients and partners throughout FOD 3 in northeastern Illinois.

Keith's original interests in nature and conservation began as a kid. Living in Woodridge, 25 miles west of Chicago, Keith spent many days along a natural waterway that passed through an area with little developed land. As he grew, the fields and forests where he once played were transformed into sprawling suburban development. "The original riffle and pool creek where I used to catch turtles by hand eventually became channelized and turned into a "greenway" with very little green in it," says Keith. "The channel itself became uninviting. The life in the stream disappeared."

Watching this made an impression on Keith, and serves as his inspiration for helping communities to develop in harmony with the landscape. "I try to work with citizens and local units of government, to show them there is a better way to build and develop." His experience reveals that as most communities grow, they view conservation as a separate issue. He feels communities must treat conservation as an interdependent issue and incorporate it into all activities and plans. With a little effort and a shift in thinking, conservation planning and best management practices can be applied to all aspects of community development, to housing, transportation, and commercial and industrial development. "Just as community officials look at and value their transportation infrastructure, they should look at their 'green' infrastructure and see it as a valuable system within their community," Keith explains. "One of the ideas I always try to share is that while there are costs for conservation solutions, conservation is an investment that will pay long term dividends."

Keith enjoys working with NRCS field offices in his FOD and working with community groups on farmland protection, watershed planning, and community assistance. "I am firmly committed to the locally-led NRCS resource planning process, which I consider the best way to assist local communities in solving local issues. My goal with NRCS is to make a difference and contribute to the conservation of Illinois' natural resources, whether in metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas." Keith, wife Annette, and their 2 children live in Plainfield, IL.

Conservation Concepts...



...The "New & Improved" Urban Manual ...

Coming soon to an NRCS/SWCD office near you is the new and improved Illinois Urban Manual. While already in use by conservation professionals, engineers, and planners in Illinois and across the country, NRCS has just finished an effort to revise the entire document, improving and adding helpful information on existing standards and specifications, adding a number of completely new standards, and providing quality drawings & designs for urban conservation solutions.

According to NRCS Community Assistance Specialist Kent Sims, who headed up the effort, "We've incorporated a great deal of research and data that provides interpretive findings, suitability ratings, and native species recommendations that make the standards even more useful and valuable to Urban Manual users." Working through the State Community Assistance Committee, NRCS staff and a number of specialists, including Jeffrey Mengler from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Renee Hildebrandt from Illinois DNR. Both offered time and experience in revising and creating several standards. NRCS Engineer Joel Schmidt and CAD Technician Manuel Quinones worked on revising and adding new standard drawings to the Manual. NRCS Community Planner Gina Gericke played a crucial role in formatting and incorporating photos into the document.

New revised standards are now available for Permanent Vegetation, Grass-lined Channels, Silt Fences, and Temporary Sediment Traps. "Many of our users are in need of more specifics, more details, and more conservation options. This revised manual provides just that," adds Sims.

The Manual will be available in a traditional hard copy binder version as well as on a CD-ROM that users can browse, select the standard they need, and access it quickly. NRCS Soil Conservationist Jim Rospopo has redesigned the Manual for easy access through the IL NRCS website.

According to NRCS State Conservationist Bill Gradle, "The Team that has pulled this together has made a real effort to ensure that this resource is a user friendly, easy to use, quality product." The timing couldn't be better. With NPDES Phase II regulations coming out, more and more individuals and communities will be in search of solutions and options for controlling erosion and protecting resources on 1-acre sites. "I think these revisions, and the availability of this information online and on CD will quickly make the Illinois Urban Manual the manual of choice for conservation professionals," adds Sims.

Just Get Certified!

Q. What is CPESC?

A. A CPESC is a recognized specialist in soil erosion and sediment control. The certification program, sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society and the International Erosion Control Association, in cooperation with the American Society of Agronomy, provides the public with evidence of professional qualifications.



Q. How much does it cost?

A. Application Fee\$ 125.00
Renewal Fee for SWCS & IECA members.....\$40.00

Q. What are the requirements?

A. 1) Bachelor of Science degree in engineering geology, soil science, natural resource management, agronomy or related field plus six years of professional level experience in soil erosion and sediment control. 2) A Masters degree in any of the above plus 2 years professional level experience. 3) Ten years or more professional level experience in soil erosion and sediment control.

Q. How do I apply?

A. The CPESC application has three parts: the application, your professional experience, and professional references. You may download the application (in .pdf format). The application fee is \$125 which must be submitted with your completed application. If you have any questions call David Ward at 919-261-9534, E-Mail CPESC@bellsouth.net or IECA (970-879-3010). Ask them to send you the CPESC application.

Q. How do I become a CPESC?

A. Complete the application, include the letters of reference and return it to the SWCS with the application fee. The application will be reviewed by a panel of prominent CPESCs. Once your application is approved, you must pass a written and oral exam.

Q. How can our organization sponsor the CPESC Review course and Exam?

A. If a group would like to sponsor a CPESC Review Course and Exam, the first step is to contact an approved CPESC Instructor or contact David Ward to obtain a list of approved instructors. The organizing group would then contact the Instructor to coordinate the presentation of the course.

Q. Where can I take the exam?

A. The exam is offered at different events throughout the year. Check the calendar of events for the next location. The exam can also be proctored by a CPESC in your area. For more details, call David Ward (see information listed previously).

Q. Is there a class I can take to prepare for the exam?

A. Yes, check ieca's calendar of events for class locations.

Q. Are there study materials to prepare for the exam?

A. There is a study guide you can purchase. Email David for details and costs. Consider conferring with other certified professionals in your organization first--see if you can borrow their study guides from past years--the information hasn't changed all that much!



Holy Cow!

In the early 1900's, 60% of the U.S. population lived in rural America and farmers made up 25% of the population. Today, only 20% live there and farmers make up less than 2%.

The U.S. has lost 30 million acres of farmland since 1970--that's a loss of 2 acres every minute!

Would you like to receive *Conservation and Your Community*? Provide us the information below to get on our mailing list!

Name

Organization/Affiliation

Address

Ph:

Call or send information to Natural Resources Conservation Service, 313 Naperville Road, Suite J, Plainfield, IL 60544 c/o Kent Sims. PH: (815) 577-3597/FX: (815) 577-3608. Email at kent.sims@il.usda.gov

Had a Change of Heart?

If you are currently on our mailing list but no longer want to receive this newsletter, please let us know. Current budget restraints require NRCS to cut costs wherever possible. Please email Kent at kent.sims@il.usda.gov to be removed from our list of subscribers. Thanks!



This newsletter is published quarterly by USDA NRCS. Send correspondence, articles, photos, calendar items, or questions to Paige Buck, Conservation and your Community Editor c/o NRCS, 2118 W Park Court, Champaign, IL 61821 or call (217) 353-6606 or email at paige.buck@il.usda.gov

Conservation Easements: A Word of Advise From a "Pro"

Comments made by Randall Arendt at the Keep America Growing Conference, June 1996

Randall Arendt, a conservation design champion, shared his thoughts on six key componets of a successful agriculture land protection program. "The key to easements is to buy only productive farmland, not just 'open space,'" says Arendt.

1. The Right Land. Make sure you are protecting some of the most valuable farmland in the area. This means you need to measure or consider its market value, actual productivity, the wildlife habitat potential of the land, soil types, the historical value or significance to the region, and existence (or potential) of any endangered species on the land.

2. The Right Size Parcel. Make sure you are selecting an appropriate amount of farmland. Sometimes getting it "ALL" is not a realistic or feasible option, even though it sounds good. When bargaining or setting goals for the amount of land, remember to think strategically, consider the long-term implications of your decision, and use any and all available statistics, data, or GIS layers to help you make this crucial decision. Sometimes the small or medium-sized farms are the best choice. Often they hold more long-term success and value than the big land grabs we dream about. Be sure that what you save is a size that the community can support, sustain, and manage now and in the future.

3. Don't Get in a Rut. Remember to use a mix of farmland ~~preservation techniques--voluntary incentives~~ and zoning and regulatory options. This ensures that the community shares in the cost of protection. Use both PDRs (Purchase of Development Rights) and tax incentives--carrots and sticks--to accomplish your goals. Merge use and support of easements, cluster concepts, and tax breaks. Consider adding agriculture economic development issues to the community plan. This can make local farming activities more effective and efficient.

4. Don't Doodle. Whatever tactics or incentives you choose, make sure they will work in a timely manner. The plan you develop should work fast enough to protect prime farmland while still allowing needed development to occur.

5. Include the Locals. The plan you develop and the tools you use should be built by local consensus. Bring in the urban and rural residents--get the suburbanites and the farmers equally involved in the process. And don't forget to bring in the development community as well!

6. Check Local Policies. Check the books--your local policies and ordinances should discourage policies that actually subsidize sprawl. Instead, subsidize urban life. Policies should encourage revamping existing urban areas instead of propelling activity and development on the fringe.

Arendt encourages putting forth extra effort to spell out to the public just what the benefits are to farmland protection. "People need to have things like this explained to them because they are typically things we just take for granted," says Arendt. "Sometimes these issues turn combative right away because the local conservancy group says that 'open land' is the real issue, not farmland protection. They don't make the connection and their defenses go up, bringing all progress to a grinding halt." He recommends working with lein holders in the community--banks and mortgage lenders--to educate them on the benefits and value of farmland protection can mean a great deal to the community, especially with regard to property values.



NRCS Partner Profiles:

McHenry County Conservation District

I know what you're thinking, but this article is not going to profile a regular Soil and Water Conservation District. The McHenry County Conservation District is something different. McHenry County HAS a regular SWCD that works side-by-side with NRCS to protect natural resources and work with private landowners. The MCCD is a separate entity that fulfills a unique and additional role in the county.

Like most Illinois SWCDs, the McHenry County SWCD was established back in the 1930's or 1940's. The MCCD was established by county voters in 1971. Its purpose, as defined by state statutes, is to acquire and maintain land as open space--for Preservation, Education and Recreation. The district is governed by seven trustees appointed by the McHenry County Board and has the authority to levy taxes. State and Federal grant monies for land acquisition and development are also used. MCCD has about 50 employees who manage MCCD land and handle education, recreation, security, and operations.

"In many ways, the MCCD functions like a forest preserve district--almost like a private landowner with needs similar to all NRCS clients. They own land, they have specific needs and objectives for what they want to do with that land, and they want to protect the natural resources on it," explains NRCS District Conservationist David Brandt.

"Working with NRCS and the SWCD is a natural partnership," says Kate Halma, MCCD Director of Communications. "Our objectives and goals are based on preserving, restoring, improving, and providing educational and recreational benefits from the lands we purchase and manage. NRCS' experience with soils, erosion control, and resource planning has become a crucial part of our operation. They help to ensure our success in many of the endeavors we take on."

MCCD has many natural resource success stories that have involved the expertise of NRCS staff including two streambank stabilization projects which permanently protect a very rare "Fen" wetland called Barber Fen, which is also a Dedicated Nature Preserve; restoration of five Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) sites where miles and miles of underground tile were removed to create a quality wet prairie and wetland ecosystems; a historical project that restored Nippersink Creek to its original 100-year old meandering locale with the help of NRCS soil scientists who conducted an intense soils investigation; and a partnership venture with USEPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and NIPC to better identify high quality wetland locations in McHenry County.

"We are glad to have the opportunity to work with MCCD, and to be involved in projects that are so close to areas the public uses," explains Brandt. "It's great to have such an active and motivated partner that sees the need for and value of conservation professionals. I know we'll continue to work with this group for years to come!" At present, only five such County Conservation Districts exist in Illinois--Boone, Macon, McHenry, Putnam and Vermilion Counties. For more information, just visit the MCCD website: www.MCCDDistrict.org

Factors Influencing Erosion Losses

By: Paige Buck, NRCS State Communications Specialist

Erosion and the resulting sedimentation generally occur only when the soil is disturbed. The extent of erosion is determined by six factors--some of which are factors that can be managed, whether in a rural or urban setting.

Topography--Is the land area in question rolling, steep, or flat? Slope length and steepness are key elements in determining the volume and velocity of runoff and the degree of erosion that can occur. As both slope length and grade increase, the rate of runoff increases, and the potential for erosion intensifies. Slopes that have little or no vegetative cover must be protected from runoff and the vegetative cover must be established or re-established as quickly as possible in order to slow erosion. If possible, steep slopes should not be disturbed at all. In addition, limiting the length and gradient of slopes created or modified during development activities, runoff velocities can significantly reduce the speed that water runs off that land, which in turn reduces erosion. Keep in mind, however, that erosion still can--and does--occur on flat land. This is one factor that is generally out of one's control, although the decision as to where one builds can make this erosion factor a big issue or a non-issue.

Soil Type--Some soils just naturally have a higher likelihood of being swept away by erosive forces. This vulnerability of a soil to erosion is known as its "erodibility." Soils with a high proportion of silt and very fine sand are the most erodible because the particles themselves behave rather independently. Soil erodibility decreases as the percentage of clay and/or organic matter increases because both elements act as a binder between soil particles, holding them together tightly. However, even though clayey soils have a low erodibility potential, they are more likely to suffer from erosion losses due to runoff. Why? While clayey soils have a very high water-holding capacity compared to sands and gravels (they hold more water), they have poor infiltration characteristics, meaning it takes longer for water to be absorbed. Since large and swift moving volumes of water can easily rush over clayey surfaces without being absorbed, the likelihood of soil particles being carried off is great. While this factor is often considered out of one's control, it is one that can be managed by taking advantage of soils information and data available from NRCS. By coordinating land use planning efforts, plans, and designs with the soil type in mind, you can carefully select the best location that will result in the least disruption of the most erodible soils in the area.

Vegetative Cover--Exposed bare soil--whether it's on a freshly tilled farm tract or a construction site for a new housing development--is an open invitation to damage from soil erosion. Vegetative cover is crucial in the successful control of erosion. Vegetation (crops, grasses, even trees and shrubs) shield the soil surface from the powerful impact of falling rain. Both the plant matter above the surface as well as the extensive root systems below ground work to firmly hold soil particles in place. Vegetation also helps to maintain the soil's ability to absorb water, by providing an 'in road' to thirsty roots below. Vegetation is effective for slowing down the speed of water that runs off the soil surface. Of all the factors, this one is the easiest to control. Unfortunately,

it's often a solution that is overlooked. Granted, it takes money for seed and time to water and grow to establish vegetative cover, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

Climate--The frequency, intensity, and duration of rainfall are fundamental factors in determining the amount of runoff generated on the land. The probability of soil particles detaching and being transported increases with larger volumes of rainfall. Clearly, even the most powerful landowners and decision-makers have very little say in what Mother Nature throws our way, making this factor completely out of one's control. However, successful management and awareness of all the other factors can have a huge effect on the impact that the climate has on the soil resources you're working to protect.

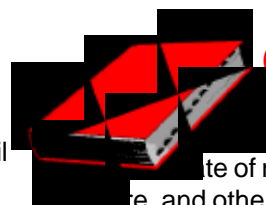
Conservation Practices--If you have successfully avoided construction on the most erodible soils, selected site locations on the least steep areas, and have established and maintained protective vegetative cover, then neither excessive rainfall or a drought will have all the damaging negative impacts that were possible. Now comes the factor that you have the most control over: **installation and maintenance of conservation practices**. Time-tested solutions involve biological and structural measures that incorporate and add to the benefits gained by managing all the previous factors. Whether your site requires a grassed channel, a sediment trap, diversion, check dam, silt fence, swale, terrace, or a grade stabilization structure, conservation practices can oftentimes have the greatest impact on your fight against erosion.

The bottom line is simple: Control what you can; plan around the rest--that's the best anybody can do!



"Red List of Threatened Species"--

-A new Red Data book released from IUCN The World Conservation Union combines listings for both animal and planting listings and is the first time this data is made available on CD-Rom. This publication also combines new assessments--including all bird species, many antelope and bat species, and more than 18,000 taxa. Available from Island Press, 2000, 82 pages. Sold as a set (CD ROM and booklet). Also available from the same publisher is the 1997 Red List of Threatened Plants and the 1996 Red List of Threatened Animals. Visit www.islandpress.org for more details.



Conservation Terminology

Internal Soil Drainage--The downward movement of water through the soil profile. The rate of movement is determined by the texture, structure, and other characteristics of the soil profile and underlying layers and by the height of the water table, either permanent or perched. Relative terms for expressing internal drainage are none, very slow, medium, rapid, and very rapid.

FEMA: Making Some Good Moves

Taken from the *Natural Hazards Observer*, November 2001

FEMA Guidelines

FEMA recently issued the Draft Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners, which defines technical requirements, necessary coordination and documentation, and specifications for flood hazard maps and related National Flood Insurance Program Products. The guidelines compile requirements from previous FEMA documents and reflect recent changes associated with the implementation of the FEMA Map Modernization Program, including the Cooperative Technical Partners Initiative.

The guidelines include sections on flood studies and mapping, map revisions and amendments, and program support. Numerous appendices contain information on topics ranging from aerial surveying and mapping to evaluating flood protection systems to specifications and format for flood insurance study reports. To view or download copies of the draft Guidelines, see www.fema.gov/mit/tsd/dll_cgs.htm. The agency emphasizes that these Guidelines are a "living" document that will be updated whenever FEMA determines changes are appropriate. For more information, contact the Hazards Study Branch, Hazard Mapping Division, Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration, FEMA, 500 C Street, SW, Washington DC 20472 or email femacg@s@floodmaps.net

FEMA Map Modernization Coalition

A score of organizations, representing state and local officials; the nation's Realtors, home builders, and surveyors; and those with a stake in floodplain management, development review, disaster mitigation, emergency response, land-use planning, and environmental protection have formed a coalition to support funding of FEMA's Map Modernization efforts.

These organizations believe that accurate and usable floodplain maps are the foundation of good local planning and natural disaster mitigation. However, many of the nation's flood maps are as much as 30 years old, and a full third are more than 15 years old. Many of these maps do not reflect current development and as a result do not show changes in flood hazards. Reliance on these outdated flood maps in making decisions about new development can harm both commercial and residential property owners and the taxpayers who ultimately pay for flood damage.

The new consortium recognizes that an aggressive program to update, modernize, and maintain the inventory of flood maps is essential and that FEMA's Map Modernization Program has laid the framework for this effort. However, with insufficient funding, progress has been slow. FEMA welcomes the support of the coalition and looks forward to working with the group to update the nation's flood map inventory. For information on the coalition's mission, contact Susan Gilson, National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, 202/218-4133.

Barriers *(Continued from page 1...)*

Financing by Formula. Because mixed-use projects are outside the kinds of real estate projects that can readily get bank financing, they often have difficulty in securing financial backing.

Proposing High Density without Amenity. This barrier confronts, head on, the American public's distaste for sprawl and its distaste for density. Historically, high density has come without amenity, while sprawl has been marketed as having all the amenities. McMahon argues that density with amenity will sell. Thus, he says that for most Americans "character of the neighborhood" is indeed more important than "size of the lot."

Public Infrastructure Subsidies. This barrier is the flip side of the third barrier (high development and process costs). As long as government is willing to pay for roads, utilities, schools, etc., developers will have an incentive to build in remote areas.

Low Expectations. This is his term for what he describes as "zoning on demand." He says too many local officials accommodate the proposals of developers regardless of existing zoning and comprehensive plans. If the proposal is in conflict with either or both of these, the area is rezoned to make way for the proposal.

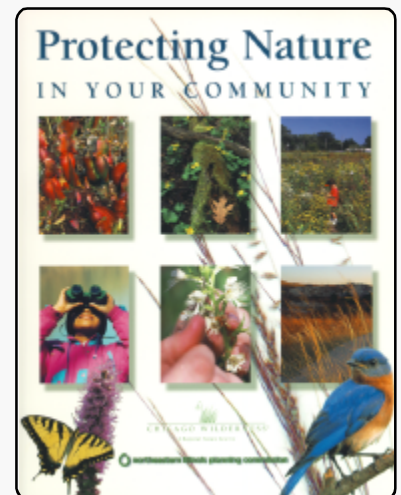
In the end, McMahon sounds a hopeful, encouraging note saying that these barriers can be overcome. His answer to the question of how--education.

Places to Visit . . .

Since winter is still here and going outdoors might not be advisable... consider visiting this new publication site on the Internet:

http://www.nipccog.il.us/protecting_2001%20.htm

You can read or download chapters of this publication which provide helpful information on comprehensive landuse planning, compatible zoning and subdivision regulations, improved stormwater management, natural landscaping, lake, stream and wetland protection, and open space preservation. Save the powerpoint presentation version or just read the text. Take time this winter to learn what **you** can do to make a difference in your community!





**Illinois NRCS
Community Assistance
Vision**

To provide Illinois communities, units of government, and other clients with quality NRCS products and services that balance land development needs with natural resource conservation issues. This goal will be accomplished by a NRCS network of professional teams working together to address significant community issues

**Newsletter
Highlights:**



- **Make Easements Easy**
- **New FEMA Maps?**
- **Are You Certified? Just Do It!**